

# Department of Human Services

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(517) 373-7394



## Articles in Today's Clips Monday, July 9, 2007

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## KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

### Mother arrested in death of teenage son in April

Sunday, July 08, 2007

By Sarita Chourey

[schourey@kalamazoogazette.com](mailto:schourey@kalamazoogazette.com) 388-5875

The mother of a Sturgis teenager whose death in April was considered suspicious by police has been arrested.

St. Joseph County Prosecutors have charged Teresa Lea-Ann Kleine, 36, with involuntary manslaughter, child abuse and three counts of delivery of a controlled substance, according to a release from the Sturgis Police Department.

Police found Kleine's 15-year-old son, Daniel Jacob Shepherd, dead at the 200 block of South Jefferson Street in Sturgis on April 28.

Kleine allowed her son and other minors to smoke marijuana in her home and did not seek medical care for Shepherd when it was needed, according to police.

Kleine on Saturday was lodged at the St. Joseph County Jail on \$4,000-10 percent bail.

#### Fire destroys home

Police are investigating a fire at the 1200 block of Red Pine Way that destroyed a two-story house at about 3 a.m. Saturday.

No one was injured, according to Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety Lt. Victor Ledbetter.

Anyone with information is asked to call Kalamazoo Public Safety at 337-8994 or Silent Observer at 343-2100.

#### Woman hit in road

An 83-year-old woman is in stable condition after she was struck Friday evening by a 23-year-old motorist in Oshtemo, police said.

Eleanor Matecki was crossing Drake Road near Green Meadow Road and walked into the path of Erik Roemer's car, according to a release from the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office. Police responded at 6:01 p.m. and Matecki was transported to Bronson Methodist Hospital.

Anyone with more information is asked to call the sheriff's department at (269) 385-6150 or Silent Observer at (269) 343-2100.

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## Mother charged with manslaughter in son's death

Updated: July 7, 2007 08:57 AM EDT



STURGIS -- A mother is arrested, charged in the homicide of her 15-year-old son.

36 year-old, Teresa Lea-Ann Kleine of Sturgis, was arrested shortly after 11 a.m. after police received a Crime Stoppers tip informing them that she was at a home on the cities south side.

Police say, on April 28, 2007 Sturgis police responded to the 200 block of S. Jefferson Street to assist the Sturgis fire department on a death investigation. 15-year-old Daniel Jacob Shepherd was found dead at the scene. The child's death was suspicious and unexplained.

As a result of an investigation, St. Joseph County Prosecutors authorized Kleine's arrest and charged her with one count of involuntary manslaughter. Police say Kleine "caused the death of Daniel Jacob Shepherd by committing the following act or acts in a grossly negligent manner, and the grossly negligent failure to perform the following legal duty, allowing Shepherd and other minors to smoke marijuana in her home and neglected to seek medical treatment for her son when it was clearly necessary to seek medical treatment for her him."

Kleine is also charged with first degree child abuse and with three counts of delivery of the controlled substance, marijuana. She is being held at the St. Joseph County jail on \$4,000.00 bond.



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Article published Jul 8, 2007

## Coleman aims to talk, president to president

By Wayne Peal

### COMMUNITY EDITOR

Eric Coleman takes over this month as president of the National Association of Counties and one of his first orders of business is to set up meetings with the men and women who'd like to be president of the U.S.

"We're hoping to have as many of them as we can visit the conference," said Coleman a Democrat, who represents a portion of Southfield on the Oakland County Commission.

The convention to which he refers is NACo's annual conference July 13-17 in Richmond, Va., during which Coleman will be inducted as president. NACo is a Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group which represents more than 2,000 of the nation's counties at the federal level.

Meetings have already been held with John Edwards' staff and Coleman is currently in talks with staff members from the Hillary Clinton and Barrack Obama campaigns to bring those candidates to the convention.

"We want to make sure that, whoever the next president is, they don't forget county issues," Coleman said.

Unfunded mandates - programs ordered by Congress but to be paid for by locals - are a special source of friction between counties and the federal government, Coleman noted.

"We were hoping that with a change of parties there would be progress on this issue but, as of yet, it hasn't happened," he said.

Other major initiatives for Coleman during the coming year include programs for youngsters who "age out" of the foster care system and anti-child abuse program. NACo is looking to create pilot programs to assist those turning 18 in foster care.

"They go from foster care into the adult world and, frequently, they're unprepared," Coleman said. "Some of these youngsters turn to crime or become homeless and we're looking to prevent that."

As for anti-child abuse initiatives, Coleman is looking to use Oakland County's own child abuse task force as a model for other counties throughout the nation.

Formed in 1935, NACo's membership covers roughly 80 percent of the nations population.

Coleman has served as a member of NACo's 120-member board of directors, as well as on its five-member executive committee, before becoming president. He was first elected an Oakland County commissioner in 1996.

A past chairman of the county commissions Democratic caucus, the top Democrat on the GOP-dominated board, Coleman has also served as president of the Southfield Schools Board of Education.

A 30-year Southfield resident, Coleman holds a bachelor of fine arts degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and has taught elementary, high school and community college.

Coleman's commission seat includes most of Southfield south of 11 Mile Road, as well as other sections of the city.

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Monday, July 09, 2007

Detroit Free Press

Letters to the Editor

## **Support foster families**

It is not foster care/adoption subsidies that reduce human life to a commodity. It's the abuse and neglect that has already stripped many kids of their dignity. ("Fix foster adoptions," letters, June 14). I am also not aware of this "golden goose" pumping money into the foster care system.

As an adoptive parent of two foster children, I am thankful for the assistance from the state but, I am in no way living the high life with my monthly stipend.

If you take away that subsidy, there are a lot of people who are serious caretakers who may not be able to afford taking in these children.

*Julie M. Palmer*

Chesterfield Township

July 9, 2007

# A Battle Over Expansion of Children's Insurance

By [ROBERT PEAR](#)

[WASHINGTON](#), July 8 — The fight over a popular health insurance program for children is intensifying, with President Bush now leading efforts to block a major expansion of the program, which is a top priority for Congressional Democrats.

The seemingly uncontroversial goal of insuring more children has become the focus of an ideological battle between the White House and Congress. The fight epitomizes fundamental disagreements over the future of the nation's health care system and the role of government.

Democrats have proposed a major expansion of the program, the State Children's Health Insurance Program, to cover more youngsters with a substantial increase in federal spending.

Administration officials have denounced the Democratic proposal as a step toward government-run health care for all. They said it would speed the erosion of private insurance coverage. And they oppose two of the main ideas contemplated by Democrats to finance expanded coverage for children: an increase in the federal tobacco tax and cuts in Medicare payments to private insurance companies caring for the elderly.

White House objections to the Democratic plan are "philosophical and ideological," said Allan B. Hubbard, assistant to the president for economic policy. In an interview, he said the Democrats' proposal would move the nation toward "a single-payer health care system with rationing and price controls."

Democrats said the insurance program, created 10 years ago with bipartisan support, had improved access to care for millions of children and sharply reduced the number who were uninsured. Democratic leaders in both houses of Congress — with support from doctors, consumer groups and many state officials — want to increase enrollment in the program, which served 7.4 million people at some time in the last year.

"We expect a showdown on the Senate floor at the end of this month," said James P. Manley, a spokesman for the majority leader, Senator [Harry Reid](#), Democrat of Nevada. "The program, which has enjoyed broad bipartisan support, is under assault by right-wing [Republicans](#)."

State officials fear that the conflict in Washington could lead to an impasse.

"I am getting more and more nervous about the future of the program," said Judith Arnold, director of the Children's Health Insurance Program in New York.

In California, Gov. [Arnold Schwarzenegger](#), a Republican, said it was "absolutely essential" that Congress

renew and expand the program. Like many Democrats, he said Congress should increase spending by \$50 billion over the next five years — the amount decried by Mr. Bush as “a massive expansion.”

Several Republican senators said they would work with the White House to prevent a major expansion of the program.

John Hart, a spokesman for Senator Tom Coburn, Republican of Oklahoma, said Mr. Coburn saw the Democratic plan as “part of an effort to bring everyone into a socialized health care system, a clarion call for Hillary Care, part two,” referring to the Clinton administration plan for universal coverage. Senator Jim DeMint, Republican of South Carolina, shared that view.

In a June 28 memorandum, House Democratic leaders said they hoped that providing coverage for more children would be “the signature Democratic health achievement” of this Congress. But, they predicted, “The administration will battle us every step of the way.” The memorandum was sent by Representatives [John D. Dingell](#) of Michigan, Frank Pallone Jr. of New Jersey, [Charles B. Rangel](#) of New York and Pete Stark of California.

Bush administration officials recently advised drug company executives not to support a major expansion of the program.

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, a trade group, has been running television and newspaper advertisements that praise the program and urge Congress to renew it. The television advertisements show children cavorting on a playground and singing a jingle, “If you’re healthy and you know it, clap your hands.”

The drug industry has joined four organizations in a coalition to whip up support for the program. The coalition, Americans for Children’s Health, was incorporated last month and has a budget of several million dollars, mostly for advertising. Directors include lobbyists from the American Health Care Association, which represents nursing homes; the [American Medical Association](#); Families USA, a liberal-leaning nonprofit consumer group; and the Federation of American Hospitals, which represents for-profit hospitals.

Mr. Hubbard said such groups “would be making a huge mistake to support expansion of the Children’s Health Insurance Program” along the lines proposed by Democrats.

In an interview, [Michael O. Leavitt](#), the secretary of health and human services, said he had conveyed the administration’s concerns to [Billy Tauzin](#), the president of Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, and Kevin W. Sharer, the chief executive of Amgen and chairman of the trade association.

The federal government spends \$5 billion a year on the children’s insurance program. If spending continues at that level, it would total \$25 billion over five years. Congress has adopted a budget blueprint providing up to \$50 billion more, for a total of \$75 billion over five years. That dwarfs the \$5 billion increase over five years proposed by Mr. Bush in February.

The [Congressional Budget Office](#) estimated that enrollment in the program would “fall to 6.7 million” under the president’s proposal.

In recent days, the Bush administration has taken several steps to slow momentum for expansion of the program:

¶The [Department of Health and Human Services](#) has tried to redefine the magnitude of the problem by issuing a new study that says one million uninsured children are already eligible for Medicaid or the children’s insurance program. Previous estimates by private researchers and government experts put the number at more than 5 million.

¶Regional directors of the department have sent identical letters to newspapers, warning against “a government takeover of the health care marketplace.”

¶Administration officials said Congress should include the president’s proposal to change the tax treatment of employer-sponsored health benefits as part of any legislation to renew the children’s insurance program.

In his 2008 budget request, Mr. Bush proposed replacing virtually all of the current tax breaks for health insurance with a new standard deduction for any taxpayer who buys a qualifying health plan. House Democratic leaders have flatly rejected the proposal. Senate Democratic leaders have said it has no place in a bill to cover children.

To return the children’s insurance program to what he calls “its original intent,” Mr. Bush has asked Congress to reduce federal payments to the states for coverage of children in families with incomes of more than twice the poverty level. (A family of four is considered poor if its annual income is less than \$20,650.) At least 18 states cover children with family incomes more than twice the poverty level.

In Indiana, Gov. [Mitch Daniels](#), a Republican who was Mr. Bush’s first budget director, recently signed a bill into law that raised the ceiling to 300 percent of the poverty level, from 200 percent.

The New York State Legislature recently approved a proposal by Gov. [Eliot Spitzer](#), a Democrat, to increase the eligibility limit to 400 percent of the poverty level.

Mr. Leavitt said it was absurd that “families making over \$81,000 a year would have children eligible for public assistance.”

Mr. Bush and some Republicans in Congress worry that as public coverage becomes available to families with higher incomes, it tends to replace private coverage.

In a recent report, the Congressional Budget Office said that for every 100 children who get public coverage as a result of the children’s insurance program, “there is a corresponding reduction in private coverage of between 25 and 50 children.”

That increases the cost of efforts to expand coverage, according to the budget office, because the government



inevitably picks up some people who recently had private insurance when it tries to sign up the uninsured. Thus, the budget office said, to reduce the number of uninsured children by three million, states may need to add four million to six million children to the rolls.

Peter R. Orszag, director of the budget office, said that other efforts to expand coverage — for example, by offering tax breaks for buying private insurance — faced a similar challenge: some benefits would go to people who already had coverage.

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## Food pantry shelves low in summer months

Sunday, July 08, 2007

By Theresa D. McClellan and Sharon Emery

The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- On the pantry shelves at United Church Outreach Ministry, which serves needy people in Southwest Grand Rapids, there is one can of green beans and a jar of baba ghanoush.

There is a bit more at Baxter Community Center pantry on the Southeast Side, but visitors hoping to fill their cupboards from area pantries will see more empty shelves than food.

It's summertime, and the living is easy -- unless your family relies on well-stocked food pantries and the giving community is on vacation.

July is one of the busiest months for pantry use. But feeding the hungry is not always a priority for donations in the summer, said Nancy Reenders, a coordinator for the Kent County pantry network called ACCESS, or All County Church Emergency Support System.

"It's warm, and people have to pay more for things like fans. Kids are home, not eating at school, and that digs into the budget. Poor households don't have the reserves," Reenders said.

ACCESS usually serves 5,000 people monthly, but in summer that jumps to more than 5,500.

The 100 pantries in the ACCESS network use Second Harvest Gleaners, which receives food from throughout the country and locally from businesses such as Spartan Stores and Panera Bread.

Second Harvest rarely knows what food it will get, and national companies donate but don't deliver. The agency recently had to turn down \$60,000 in food because it would have cost \$900 in gas to go get it, said John Arnold, executive director.

"The food bank hits bottom in August. To bring in food can costs us \$800 to \$900 and there are times we don't have it," he said.

United Church Outreach Ministries director Bruce Roller said he loves the services the gleaners provide and his agency is among their top 10 buyers, but they still must supplement their pantries with church-supported food donations and other sources.

"We go through 600 cans of veggies a week. A lot of the foods offered is perishable and folks coming don't always have ways to keep fresh produce. Canned veggies are huge," said Roller, whose agency is at 1311 Chicago Dr. SW.

The estimated need of food for Kent County is 12 to 21 million pounds a year, and Second Harvest Gleaners distributes 7 million pounds a year, organizers said.

Trying to define the need for food statewide, a new report from Food Bank Council of Michigan found a 28 percent gap in Kent County between meals provided and meals needed, and a 37 percent gap statewide.

### Many use food banks

The report, called Blueprint to End Hunger, says the number of meals needed in a county is based on population figures for the poorest of residents. That includes individuals making up to \$10,210 annually, or

\$20,650 for a family of four.

The report estimates 10 percent of Michigan residents -- about 1 million people -- are using food banks or other emergency programs.

Many of them also receive federal food stamps which in Michigan, supplies an average monthly grant of \$88 a person. About 1.2 million Michigan residents are enrolled in that program.

When people come for food to the Baxter pantry, outreach coordinator Brian Jones looks for ways to connect them with other services, such as budgeting and financial education. The community center partners with the Grand Rapids Department of Recreation to provide children with a play-and-eat-program at Baxter.

"My main thing is empowerment, to get them out of that system and save them more money," Jones said. "It does start with the food but our job is to move them to the next level."

To meet the summer pinch, Arnold suggests givers donate their tax deductible funds to West Michigan Gleaners either directly or in the name of their nearest food pantry so the pantry can take advantage of how much food their \$10 can buy -- as much as \$200 from the food bank.

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07/09/2007

## Police: Woman kills husband

BY CHRISTINE FINGER

[cfinger@record-eagle.com](mailto:cfinger@record-eagle.com)

TRAVERSE CITY — The George Street couple mainly kept to themselves, and weren't on a first-name basis with others in the modest neighborhood just off South Airport Road.

But the East Bay Township couple fought, and their battles attracted the attention of neighbors such as Kasey Bay, who from her bedroom window sometimes heard yelling and fighting from the turquoise ranch house next door.

"Everybody heard them fighting all the time," Bay said.

At least one dispute months ago prompted a neighbor to call police, Bay said.

Early Sunday, the fighting turned deadly, when a woman stabbed and killed her husband in their house at 741 George Street, police said.

Grand Traverse County sheriff's deputies were dispatched to the house at 3:45 a.m. Sunday and arrived to find a 27-year-old man dead, sheriff's officials said.

The wife also was injured in the incident, police said. She allegedly admitted to stabbing her husband, and deputies said they recovered the weapon used in the slaying.

Grand Traverse County and other records list the occupants of 741 George Street as Alan J. Hinhala and Michelle Hinhala. Alan Hinhala and Michelle L. White were married in 2000, according to county records, and the name Hinhala was on the mailbox at the slaying scene.

Neighbor Carol Johnson lives across the street from the couple, whom she described as a quiet pair who moved into the neighborhood several years back. She said police came to the house about a year ago after another neighbor reported a domestic disturbance, but things there had been quiet since.

"They pretty much stuck to themselves," she said. "We didn't even know their first names."

Johnson said police visited her home on Sunday morning to ask if she or her son had

seen or heard anything out of the ordinary during the night. Officers told them the man was dead but didn't detail what happened. "We were shocked," she said.

County Sheriff Scott Fewins did not return a reporter's call on Sunday.

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Article published Jul 8, 2007

## Gardener brightens up downtown - with photo galleries

By Christopher Behnan

**DAILY PRESS & ARGUS**

The city of Howell owes Joanna Messina a debt of thanks.

Her "boulevard garden" at North Barnard and Higgins streets adds colors to the downtown corner with a variety of flowers, including lilies, mallows and coneflowers.

She planted the streetside garden about eight years ago, but, tongue-in-cheek, said she's yet to receive an official thank-you from the city.

The streetside garden is only one in a series of gardens surrounding Messina's home. Just below the "boulevard garden" is Messina's home and a bevy of other gardens.

They will all be on display during the ninth annual LACASA Garden Tour, scheduled for next weekend. The tour proceeds benefit LACASA's shelter in Howell Township, and the organization's services for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse.

Messina dug out an area directly below the Higgins Street sidewalk by hand to accommodate boxwoods and Happy Chappy roses, and an umbrella-covered patio below. A water fountain is home to koi and comet fish.

Ferns, hostas and astilbes are in full bloom.

The front of Messina's property, facing Barnard Street, is flush with white and pink roses. An arbor, laced with clematis and roses, greets visitors as they enter the Messina home.

An herb and vegetable garden are one side of the house, with eggplant, cucumber and other vegetables.

Messina's most treasured area, however, is the opposite side of her home, an area she calls her "little sanctuary." There, surrounded by foliage and flowers, she often relaxes on a lounge chair and listens to classical music.

Sherlock Holmes himself would have some degree of difficulty finding her there.

"That's why I call it my sanctuary," Messina explained.

A lifelong Howell-area resident, Messina began gardening as a small girl, growing chives and other small plants at her childhood home. Gardening was a constant there.

"It just kind of rubbed off on me," she said.

She later completed Michigan State University Extension office's master gardener course.

This year will be her second time on the LACASA tour. Her first was five years ago.

While it's difficult to keep flowers in full bloom in mid-July, Messina said she's up to the challenge.

"I'm not nervous this year like I was five years ago. It's so much more fun than it was the first year," she said.

Gardening is a natural for downtown Howell residents, Messina said. She said she's usually able to see balloons fly over her home during the Michigan Challenge Balloonfest. In other words, the community is right in your backyard, she explained.

"I love living in downtown. I love being right in the middle of everything," Messina said.

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Article published Jul 8, 2007

## Maria Stuart: The Garden Tour sprouts treasured memories of dad

In the summer of 1999, there was in my life a harmonious convergence of events. The first LACASA Garden Tour, which sprung from a series on gardeners in this newspaper, was set to take place; I was about to give birth to my son; and my dad started digging a hole in his back yard.

It's not quite a year since my dad died.

For years, my dad suffered some serious health problems. A diabetic, he was plagued by neuropathy, which affected the nerves of his legs. At one point, doctors told him he'd never walk again, but true to his fiercely independent, stubborn "they-can't-tell-me-anything, I'll-show-them" streak, he regained his mobility and huge amounts of health, though pain was a pretty constant companion.

A quiet kind of guy, my dad loved working with his hands. He did some amazing work on an old Victorian house in Howell he bought as an investment property, but which ended up as his own home. In the summer of 1999, he turned his attention to the outside of the house.

I'll let my column that ran in July 2000 tell the rest of the story. It ran just before the second LACASA Garden Tour, on which my father's yard was garden No. 7:

*My father loves to do physical labor. He's a mason by trade and has a deep appreciation for rock and stone.*

*He also does things on a large scale.*

*If my dad were a painter, he would have been a muralist like Diego Rivera. If he were a writer, he would have written "War and Peace." If he were a rock star, he would have written "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida."*

*You get the idea. He always does things in a big, big way and his backyard pond is no exception.*

*He started building it last year, just a few weeks before I delivered my son. I began my maternity leave early and spent a lot of time watching the pond's beginnings.*

*It started as a small hole in my parents' side yard.*

*The next day, it was bigger, and a couple days later even bigger yet.*

*Every single day throughout the July heat wave, my dad was out in the yard digging.*

*And the hole kept getting bigger and bigger.*

*My father worked slowly and steadily during the day. He treated his work as if he were punching a clock — starting in the morning, breaking for lunch, and then working throughout the afternoon. At night, he surfed the Internet for information and supplies. He kept on digging until the hole in his yard appeared more the size of a Great Lake than a pond. To an outsider, he could have easily looked like Don Quixote with a shovel, but there was a vision in his mind — and as he dug, he designed.*

*First came the interior of the pond.*

*Then came the waterfall and the statue and the butterfly garden.*

*Finally, there was the completion of a beautiful patio made of rock.*

*In all, nearly nine tons of material went into this project: four tons of Canadian ledge rock for the patio and five tons of field stone for the pond. Every single boulder, rock and piece of ledge rock was hauled into the yard and placed by hand.*

*It's a breathtaking creation, something you'd never, ever dream of finding in the yard of a city home. Unless you're looking for it, you'd never notice it from the street or sidewalk because it's so tucked away; it feels very European and very relaxing.*

*I marvel at it because I saw first-hand how much work and energy went into it.*

I spent much of that second tour with my nearly 1-year-old baby sitting on the deck of my parent's home, enjoying the steady stream of admiring people coming through. The lovely weather, the laid-back vibe of the tour and my usually quiet dad beaming and chatting to strangers about his pond are memories I'll cherish always.

Each year, as the tour comes around, the image of my dad digging the hole that became a pond pops into my mind and I smile; this tour, the first without my dad, means so much more to me.

For everyone with a garden on the tour, or who enjoys gardening, transforming outside spaces is a physical labor of love, a melding of the mind and hand in creating something beautiful. Gardeners are special people, with an appreciation for the earth and a love of beauty.

If your soul needs some feeding, consider the Garden Tour. You'll also be helping LACASA, which works with victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse.

You'll also be paying tribute to people who do the most with what they have and use that of which they can dream to create things of beauty on earth, just like my dad did.

*Maria Stuart is the managing editor of the Livingston County Daily Press & Argus, and a long-time member of the LACASA Board of Directors. You can reach her at (517) 552-2856 or by sending e-mail to [mstuart@gannett.com](mailto:mstuart@gannett.com).*

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Article published Jul 9, 2007

## Businesswoman blends garden skills, kindness - with photo gallery

By Kristofer Karol

DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

It's a mistake gardeners make all too often: They're too focused on design and don't pick up plants in which they are genuinely interested.

So says Karen Bovio, owner of Specialty Growers, which is off Golf Club Road and east of Latson Road in Genoa Township.

"Gardens should be for your enjoyment, not as something you do for other people," Bovio said. "It doesn't matter if it's right or wrong — if you like it, you should plant it."

Bovio likes plants — a lot.

She has more than 1,000 perennials and herbs for sale at her business, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

Something Bovio also likes is helping LACASA, which provides domestic violence, child abuse and sexual assault services to victims and their families and friends.

That's why during the shelter's annual Garden Tour Saturday and Sunday, Bovio will be donating 10 percent of proceeds to LACASA. No ticket is required to come visit her business.

"It's a very worthwhile cause and, of course, the Garden Tour is perfect as a way for me to donate to a charity because that's what we do here — gardening," Bovio said. "It's a good mix."

Bovio first got hooked on gardening when she was a child — her father and grandmother were into it as a hobby. But Bovio took it further, graduating with a degree from the University of Illinois in horticulture.

She worked at a nursery in Pontiac and then got her business rolling in 1982. It's been at the same address all these years.

"We have a lot of unusual things here and people tell me they shop here because they know they'll be able to find things that they're not going to find at the regular garden centers," Bovio said, citing certain types of catmint as an example.

But maintaining a quality garden is hard work, especially when it's your main source of income and it's summertime.

"You have to enjoy it because you pretty much put the rest of life on hold," Bovio said. "You don't get to have your Saturdays off and go out on the lake. You have to be here selling plants because that's when people are going to be here."

"Since I love what I do, it's not a huge thing to give up."

All the work should be noticeable by now: Her staple plant — the daylily — is blooming.

Bovio said she's so enamored with daylilies because her first horticulture mentor was into them as well.

The business owner plans on holding a daylily open house from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. July 21-22 and will hold a workshop about them at 1 p.m. each day.

Flowers certainly make Bovio's day.

"It is just a pleasant business because you're dealing with the happy side of life," she said. "Certainly, there's bringing beauty into the world — that's a big factor, the serenity."

"People garden for therapy. It's a break from the routine for some people. For me, it is the routine."



## KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

### Teachers, state employees have been made scapegoats

Sunday, July 08, 2007

By Mary L. Chamberlain

Teachers work hard in often difficult and dangerous situations. They have spent time, effort and money to become educated and qualified to teach. Teachers often make wage concessions and pay higher amounts for insurance premiums. Teachers spend evenings and weekends grading papers and preparing lessons for their students. They must continue to take classes to retain their certifications.

State employees have frequently given up scheduled raises to help with state budget problems. They pay a portion of their insurance premiums and have seen their deductibles and co-pays increase in the past few years.

A few years ago, state employees gave up their scheduled raises because the budget was "in crisis." A few weeks after that happened, the Legislature gave itself a nearly 30 percent raise in pay and benefits.

Recently, state employees have been required to give up 4 hours pay in each pay period, either by taking 4 hours off or working the full pay period with the hours credited to their retirement. Will they find that the extra contribution may be stripped from them when retirement day comes?

No other collectively bargained wage and benefit package is subject to such assault as those of Michigan teachers and state employees. I don't know what the rate of retirement benefits for other public sector employees is, but I do know that the 70 percent figure used in state Rep. Lorence Wenke's Viewpoint is not entirely accurate.

I retired from the state in 2002. After 20 years of service, my retirement benefit is 40 percent of my final year's wage compensation. I would be interested in seeing the research that says that most public sector retirees receive 70 percent.

State employee pension plan administration has been turned over to an out-of-state company, Citi-Street in Massachusetts. This function was previously administered by the Department of Management and Budget. The fund always made money while it was administered in-house and was not subject to the administration fees of an outside entity. Gov. John Engler sent it out of state, but I don't see any effort to bring it back.

The state employee prescription coverage plan is with a company in Missouri and state employees and retirees are given the incentive of lower co-pays to have the prescriptions mailed to them by an out-of-state pharmacy. Engler sent it there, but, again, no effort has been made to bring it back. This has hurt many small pharmacies in Michigan which, in turn, hurts the economy. Any time a business downsizes or closes, jobs are lost and the ripple effect is felt locally.

State legislators are term-limited, but receive lifetime health care and retirement benefits. How does that equate to the length-of-employment requirement for career state employees to be eligible for benefits?

Public school employees and state civil service employees did not cause the budget crisis and making them the scapegoats will not solve it.

Mary L. Chamberlain resides in Delton.

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